

The Smail House
512 N. Curry St.
Carson City
Nevada

HABS NO. NEV-13-16 HABS
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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

THE SMAIL HOUSE

HABS No. NEV-13-16

Location: 512 North Curry Street (SW corner of North Curry and West Robinson Streets), Carson City, Nevada

Present Owner: Mr. Burd G. Lindsay

Present Occupant: Mr. and Mrs. Vienneau

Present Use: Dwelling

Statement of Significance: A typical small Carson City dwelling of the mid-nineteenth century, the Smail House has surprisingly sophisticated details and trim.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: c. 1862. The property was sold in 1862 by one of the four men who platted Carson City to James Smail. The 1862 Directory of Nevada Territory lists one N. Smail, carpenter, as living at the S.W. corner of Curry and Robinson Streets. (Presumably, both sources refer to the same Mr. Smail). Smail sold it the month after he bought it, but for almost three times his purchase price, indicating that a substantial improvement had been made.
2. Architect: none known
3. Original and subsequent owners: The house at 512 North Curry Street is located on lot number 1 of Block 57 of Proctor and Green's Division of Carson City. (Frank M. Proctor and B.F. Green were two of the four original purchasers in 1858 of the Eagle Ranch, upon which Carson City was platted.) The following references tracing the title of this lot are found in the Ormsby County, Nevada Deed Books.

1862 Deed May 5, 1862, recorded in Book 1, page 201. James Smail bought from F.M. Proctor the lot on the SW corner of Curry and Robinson Streets (34 ft. on Curry and 80 ft. on Robinson), "being lot 1 of Block 57", for \$250.00.

1862 Deed June 13, 1862, recorded in Book 1, page 288. John McAvoy bought lot 1 of Block 57 from James Smail for \$600.00.

- 1862 Deed July 16, 1862, recorded in Book 1, page 378.
G.D. Hall bought lot 1 of Block 57 from John McAvoy for \$500.00.
- 1863 Deed January 10, 1863, recorded in Book 4, page 381.
Edward Sweeney bought lot 1 of Block 57 from Garven D. Hall for \$1,000.00.
- 1877 Deed February 20, 1877, recorded in Book 18, page 272.
Matt Rinckel bought several properties from Edward Sweeney, one of which was lot 1 in Block 57, for \$4,624.00.
- 1878-1891 Several transactions of large blocks of real estate, including lot 1 of Block 57 are noted in this period. References are made to Deeds of 1878 (Book 19, p. 35), 1883 (Book 22, p. 419), 1886 (Book 24, p. 226) and 1891 (Book 25, p. 396).
- 1894 Deed November 5, 1894, recorded in Book 25, page 517.
Lilian A. Dauchy, Administratrix of the estate of John F. Egan, deceased, deeded several properties, among which was lot 1 of Block 57, to P. Manogue of Sacramento for \$5.00. (note: P. Manogue was the Reverend Father Patrick Manogue, priest and builder of the well known church of St. Mary's in the Mountains in Virginia City and later Bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento. The details of his interest in Egan's property are given in Book 20, page 599.)
- 1898 Deed July 18, 1898, recorded in Book 29, page 68.
E.D. Sweeney bought lot 1 of Block 57 from George Tyrell, County Treasurer and ex officio tax collector, to settle the estate of P. Monogue. The property was assessed at \$300.00.
- 1913 Deed February 17, 1913, recorded in Book 36, page 328.
Sweeney deeded the lot to his wife.
- 1919 Deed September 23, 1919, recorded in Book 38, page 5.
B.G. Lindsay and Ellen Lindsay, his wife, bought from Nellie W. Lammon, acting Administratrix of the estate of Mr. E.D. Sweeney, lot 1 of Block 57 for \$325.00.
- 1925 Deed December 3, 1925, recorded in Book 85, page 189.
Burd G. Lindsay obtained from Ellen L. Lindsay an undivided one half interest in several lots, among which was lot 1 of block 57 for \$10.00.

4. Original plans, construction, etc.: none known. The cornice shows an interesting, and knowledgeable, modification of classic forms, and is more elaborate than would be expected on an other-wise modest building. Seemingly original, the cornice may well owe its existence to the fact that the first recorded occupant of the property, and perhaps builder of the house, was a carpenter.
5. Alterations and additions: The front porch may be an addition. It is not shown in the 1875 "Birds Eye View of Carson City" drawn by Augustus Koch. While this omission in the view cannot be taken as concrete evidence that the porch did not then exist, the view is known to be accurate in most particulars. Structurally and visually, the porch is joined to the facade in a rather awkward fashion, blocking the cornice return on the gable, which may also indicate its later provenance. The solid frame parapet wall on the lower third of the porch is a later modification.

The only interior decorative modification of note is the cabinet installed in the wall between the dining room and kitchen. This appears to date from the turn of the century, and is known to have been in the house when it was purchased by the present owner in 1919.

B. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: The house is shown on the "Birds Eye View of Carson City, Ormsby County, Nevada, 1875," drawn by Augustus Koch and published by Britton, Rey and Co. of San Francisco. (Copy in the Nevada State Museum, Carson City).
2. Bibliography: Ormsby County, Nevada, Deed Books.

Kelly, J. Wells, compiler. Directory of Nevada Territory.
San Francisco: Valentine and Co., 1862 (Talisman, 1962
reproduction of 1862 volume).

Interview, November 3, 1972, with Mr. Burd Lindsay, current owner of the property.

Prepared by: S. Allen Chambers, Jr.
Architectural Historian
Historic American Buildings
Survey
November 1972

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Merit and Interest: A small mid-nineteenth century house with interesting details showing modification of Classic forms.
2. Condition of fabric: Fair.

B. Detailed Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions 20 ft. (3 bays) by 45 ft. (4 bays); one story; rectangular shape.
2. Foundations: Low; large blocks of squared sandstone.
3. Wall Construction: Narrow bevel siding on main portion of the house. Novelty siding on the western wing. Corner boards. Walls are painted yellow with white trim. There is no indication of the original color.
4. Structural system: Wooden frame.
5. Porch: Across the eastern front there is a three-bay porch five feet in depth, covered with a shed roof. The columns consist of paired 2" x 2" pieces with a space between them; they have moulded capitals. A solid parapet wall now interrupts the lower part of these columns; this appears to be an alteration.
6. Chimney: There is a small brick chimney on the ridge at the west end of the main portion of the house; it is supported on corbels inside the building.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and Doors: There are three openings to the east porch. In the central opening there is a four-paneled door; those at the sides contain glazed (French) doors. Plain trim has cap at the top consisting of a dentil course and mouldings.
 - b. Windows: There are three windows in each side wall, with plain trim. Sash are double hung, six lights over six lights.
8. Roof:

- a. The main portion of the house has a gable roof covered with painted shingles. The porch and a low section at the west end have shed roofs; that at the west is covered with corrugated sheet metal.

The house cornice is boxed and is crowned with a cyma recta; it returns at the gable ends. Below it there is a frieze with a dentil course, divided into plain panels (suggesting metopes) and triglyphs, which consist of two cyma recta mouldings symmetrically joined, placed vertically. There are narrow mouldings at the top and bottom of this frieze, which also extends under the raking cornice of the gables. The shed roof at each end has a small cornice moulding of slight projection, under which is a dentil course.

- b. There are no dormers.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The main portion of the house is divided into four rooms, the pair on the north side being wider than the two bedrooms on the south side. At the west end there are two rooms: kitchen on the north and bathroom at the south.
2. Flooring: The floor is covered with modern materials.
3. Walls and Ceiling: Papered, apparently over plaster. Those ceilings over the western part slope, and are finished with matched and beaded boards.
4. Doorways and Doors: Doors, which appear to be original, have two plain vertical panels. Some at the west end have four moulded panels. There is a wide rectangular opening between the two major rooms - living and dining. The bedrooms and bathroom are reached through a single door in the north partition of each.
5. Trim: Door and window trim is plain. That of the openings in the east front extends to the floor. There is a simple base around the rooms.
6. Cabinetwork: In the partition between dining a room and kitchen there is a cabinet with leaded-glass doors, below which there are drawers. This appears to date from c. 1900.
7. Hardware: The vertical-paneled doors have cast-iron box locks and porcelain knobs.

D. Site and Surroundings:

This house faces east and is located on level ground at the southwest corner of North Curry Street and West Robinson Street. The lot is small.

At the west end there is a frame garage with a sandstone block foundation, novelty siding, gable roof covered with corrugated sheet metal, and open eaves.

Prepared by: Harley J. McKee
Supervisory Architect
National Park Service
Date of Visit - August 17, 1972

PART III. Project Information

These records are part of the documentation made during the latter half of 1972 and the summer of 1973 in a project undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the Nevada State Park System to record structures in Carson City and nearby areas.

The project was under the general supervision of John Poppeliers, Chief, Historic American Buildings Survey. Eric R. Cronkhite, Administrator, Nevada State Park System, and Mrs. Marshall Humphreys of the Nevada Landmarks Society assisted the HABS recorders in Nevada. Professor Harley J. McKee, Supervisory Architect, National Park Service, selected the subjects and provided architectural data for the sixteen Carson City structures which were recorded. Historical documentation for these buildings was prepared by S. Allen Chambers, Jr., Architectural Historian, Historic American Buildings Survey. Project Supervisor for the 1973 Nevada Summer Team, which produced the measured drawings, was Robert L. Hartwig of Harvard University. Student assistant architects were John T. M. Creery (University of Utah), Robert P. Mizell (University of Florida), and Jack W. Schafer (University of Cincinnati). Photographs were made by Aaron A. Gallup of Sacramento, California.